Draft of Proposed changes to the
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Houston, Texas

Current by-laws are in black. **Proposed Changes are in Red.**

Chapter 1
MISSION STATEMENT
BL1.01. Open doors in loving kindness, *open lives to grow faith*, open hearts to embrace justice, open hands in humble service with our God.

Vision Statement: A community of healing and hope in action

Chapter 2
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
BL2.01. The organizational structure of this congregation shall be as follows:
   a. Voting members of the congregation. There shall be an annual meeting of the voting members and special meetings may be called in accordance with C10.
   b. Pastor(s) (Chapter 9)
   c. Congregation Council (Chapter 12)
   d. Committees (Chapter 13)
   e. Organizations

Chapter 3
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
BL 3.01. The annual meeting shall be held in two parts. The Congregation Council must adopt a formal agenda at a properly called Congregation Council meeting prior to the first part of the annual meeting.

The first part of the annual meeting shall be held on All Saint's Sunday. The agenda must include of adopting a budget and electing Congregation Council members.

The second part of the annual meeting shall be held in January. Its agenda must include of the following: approval of the annual report *and including the* pastor's report, approval of annual meeting minutes, approval of any special congregational meeting minutes, financial secretary's report, treasurer's report, election of lay delegates to the Synod Assembly, reception of petitions and communications, unfinished business, and new business.
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Chapter 4
OFFICERS
BL 4.01. President
The President shall:
  a. Be the chairperson of the Congregation and of the Congregation Council,
  b. Initiate the meetings and agendas for all council, executive committee and 
     congregation meetings.
  c. Act as a signer on all checking and investment accounts and on the safe 
     deposit box.
  d. Ensure the annual council calendar is updated and approved each year.
  e. Act as the primary signer on all contracts approved by the Council.

BL 4.02. Vice-President
The Vice-President shall:
  a. Serve as President in the absence of the President or in the event the President 
     is unable to perform the duties of the office.
  b. Act as a signer on all checking accounts and on the safe deposit box.

BL 4.03. Secretary
The Secretary shall:
  a. Be appointed by the Congregation Council.
  b. Keep accurate minutes of all duly called meetings of the Congregation, and 
     meetings of the Congregation Council, and the Executive Committee.
  c. Ensure permanent records are kept for all Congregation Council, 
     Executive Committee, and Congregation meetings.
  d. Maintain the annual Council Calendar as approved the by Council.
  e. Act as a controller of signatures for all financial activities.
  f. Monitor council member attendance at regularly scheduled council 
     meetings, taking action as described in the Council Policy Book.
  g. Collect and maintain on file any and all conflict of interest notices given 
     by council members.
  h. Facilitate with the Synod the submission and approval process for 
     congregation constitutional amendments.
  i. File a copy of approved By-law changes with the Synod.

BL 4.04. Treasurer
The Treasurer shall:
  a. Be appointed by the Congregation Council.
  b. Be responsible for signing authority Act as a signer on all bank and 
     investment accounts.
  c. Be responsible for investment of congregational funds in accordance with the 
     approval or directives of the Congregation Council.
d. Be responsible for the reconciliation of income and expenses.

e. Be responsible for filing all required Federal and State tax forms.

f. Shall provide **Ensure generation of** monthly reports to the Congregation Council and Finance Committee, including **Report of Financial Position**, a **Balance Sheet**, Income and Expense Reports for all funds, **and a Designated Fund Balance Report**, and **Check Register**.

g. Provide an annual report to the Congregation.

h. Assist in development of the annual **budget financial mission plan**.

i. **Be responsible for** ensuring **Ensure** that all designated and special funds remain inviolate.

**BL 4.05. Term of Office for Officers**

Congregation Council officers are limited to three one-year terms.

**Chapter 5**

**CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEES**

**BL 5.01. Executive Committee** (Ref. C13.01.)

The Executive Committee **shall**:

a. **Shall ensure** that decisions of the Congregation Council are carried out.

b. **Set the agenda for** monthly council meetings.

c. **Ensure that the monthly consent agenda including all reports are collected and distributed to all council members in advance of the monthly meeting.**

d. The President of the Congregation shall call meetings as required and at the request of the Pastor(s).

e. **Minutes of meetings of the Executive Committee shall be kept by the Secretary and shall be submitted to the next meeting of the Congregation Council. Submit minutes of its meetings to the Congregation Council for approval at the first regularly called Council meeting after the Executive Committee meeting.**

**BL 5.02. Nominating Committee** (Ref. C13.02.)

The Nominating Committee shall:

a. Prepare a slate of candidates for the Congregation Council. Candidates shall be from among voting members of the Congregation.

b. Elect its own chairperson and secretary. Minutes of all meetings are to be kept and submitted to the next meeting of the Congregation Council.

c. Nominate voting members of the Congregation to serve as **voting members of the congregation’s voting representative(s)** at the annual Synod Assembly.
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BL 5.03. Audit Committee (Ref. C13.03.)
The Audit Committee shall:
   a. Be responsible for the biannual audit of the congregational financial records.
   b. Meet at the direction of the Congregation Council in addition to the biannual audit.
   c. Elect its own chairperson and secretary.
   d. Prepare a report to be presented by the Committee Chairperson to the next meeting of the Congregation Council.

BL 5.04. Mutual Ministry Committee (Ref. C13.04.)
The Mutual Ministry Committee shall:
   a. Ensure that Committee proceedings are strictly confidential.
   b. Respond to any request from a called staff person or any employee that a work-related matter be presented to and discussed by the Committee.
   c. Ensure that annual staff reviews occur.
   d. Act as witnesses and/or mediators between members and staff when requested by either party.

BL 5.05. Call Committee (Ref. C13.05.)
The Call Committee shall:
   a. Act in accordance with the call procedures of the Synod.

Chapter 6
STANDING COMMITTEES
BL 6.01. Children, Youth, and Family Ministries Committee
The Children, Youth, and Family Ministries Committee shall:
   a. Provide a Christ-centered community where children, youth, and adults are equipped to walk faithfully with Jesus in order to serve the world and community.
   b. Educate, guide, enlighten, and support families of Covenant, and the community in their walk with Jesus Christ.

BL 6.02. Evangelism Committee
The Evangelism Committee shall:
   a. Keep Christ’s Great Commission to “go and make disciples” foremost in the congregation’s ministry.

BL 6.03. Finance Committee
The Finance Committee shall:
   a. Maintain Ensure complete and accurate financial giving and spending records for the congregation are maintained.
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b. Establish and maintain appropriate financial processes fiscal policies and financial procedures to ensure accurate financial records.
c. Cooperate with and provide requested data to the Audit Committee.
d. Provide monthly oversight of the Financial Secretary, and Treasurer, and Accountant.

BL 6.04. Property Committee
The Property Committee shall:
   a. Be responsible for the care and maintenance of all church property,
      including buildings, lawns, trees, shrubs, parking lot, as well as the undeveloped areas.
   b. Schedule and supervise the annual spring and fall cleaning days.
   c. Provide initial screening of all offers of donated equipment and furniture unless the donated items involve another ministry’s expertise.

BL 6.05. Social Services Ministries Committee
The Social Services Ministries Committee shall:
   a. Build relationships within our congregation and community that improve the lives of families and individuals.
   b. Provide service opportunities that deliver community services and strengthen people’s faith.

BL 6.06. Stewardship Committee
The Stewardship Committee shall:
   a. Plan and implement a year-round program of stewardship education and information.
   b. Plan and implement an annual general fund stewardship campaign.
   c. Plan and implement a capital building fund stewardship program every three years.
   d. Plan and implement an annual time and abilities stewardship campaign.

BL 6.07. Worship and Music Committee
The Worship and Music Committee shall:
   a. Assist the Congregation Council in its duties related to the worship life of the congregation.
   b. Together with the Pastor(s), develop plans for all regular and special worship services including the format, the music, and the schedules.
   c. Assign worship assistants for each month.
   d. Provide training for various worship assistants.
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BL 6.082. Ad Hoc Committees/Task Forces  
Ad Hoc Committees and/or Task Forces are to be appointed as needed with duties and responsibilities as specified by the Congregation Council.

Chapter 7  
MINISTRY TEAMS  
BL 7.01. Children, Youth, and Family Ministries Team  
The Children, Youth, and Family Ministries Team shall:  
a. Provide Christ-centered educational and enrichment activities where children, youth, and adults are equipped and encouraged to walk faithfully with Jesus in order to serve the local and global communities.  
b. Provide guidance and support to families at Covenant in their walk with Jesus Christ.  
c. Prepare an annual mission plan for CYFM.

BL 7.02. Outside Our Walls Team  
The Evangelism Team shall:  
a. Develop and execute at least one congregation wide activity per year that connects Covenant’s congregation to the local community.  
b. Develop and execute at least one congregation wide activity per year that connects Covenant’s congregation to the global community.  
c. Prepare an annual mission plan for Evangelism.

BL 7.03 Fellowship Team  
The Fellowship Team shall:  
a. Coordinate the activities of the groups that welcome people to worship including but not limited to the Information Desk volunteers, the Covenant Café volunteers, the Greeters, and Covenant Connections.  
b. Encourage the formation of small groups that meet outside of Sunday morning.  
c. Prepare an annual mission plan for Fellowship.

BL 7.04. Generous Living Team  
The Generous Living Team shall:  
a. Plan and implement a year-round program of generous living education and information.  
b. Plan and implement an annual general fund support campaign.  
c. Plan and implement a capital and/or mortgage fund support campaign every three years.  
d. Plan and implement an annual time and abilities support campaign.  
e. Prepare an annual mission plan for Generous Living.
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BL 7.05. Property Team
The Property Team shall:
   a. Ensure the care and maintenance of all church property, including buildings, lawns, trees, shrubs, parking lot, as well as the undeveloped areas.
   b. Schedule and supervise the annual spring and fall cleaning days.
   c. Develop, update and ensure the execution of annual maintenance activities.
   d. Provide initial screening of all offers of donated equipment and furniture unless the donated items involve another ministry’s expertise.
   e. Research and compare property-related contracts and submit best option to Council for approval.
   f. Prepare an annual mission plan for our property and buildings.

BL 7.06. Social Justice Team
The Social Justice Team shall:
   a. Coordinate and sponsor events and activities that support social justice in our local community including but not limited to Food Pantry support, interfaith meetings, Blood Drives, and Lifeline Screenings.
   b. Provide service opportunities for the congregation that support community services and strengthen people’s faith, including but not limited to Covenant Acts, Rebuilding Together, and Roadside Aerobics.
   c. Prepare an annual mission plan for social justice.

BL 7.07. Worship and Music Team
The Worship and Music Team shall:
   a. Assist the Congregation Council in its duties related to the worship life of the congregation.
   b. Together with the Pastor(s), develop plans for all regular and special worship services including the format, the music, and the schedules.
   c. Assign worship assistants for each month.
   d. Provide training for various worship assistants.
   e. Prepare an annual mission plan for worship and music.

Chapter 78
ORGANIZATIONS
BL 78.01. Women of the ELCA

BL 78.02. Lutheran Men in Mission
Chapter § 9
MEMBERSHIP
BL § 9.01. Membership

Members of this congregation shall be considered inactive and shall be put on inactive status whenever it has been determined by the Congregation Council that:

a. they have not attended worship during the preceding twelve months, and
b. they have made no financial offering of record over the same time period.